

A BAS THE BAND OF AVON.

At the meeting of the Chicago Public School Principals' Association, last Friday, Professor William E. Watt rose up and utterly condemned the wit, the morals, the wisdom and the art of one William Shakespeare. He said that no student should be encouraged to read such "stuff"; that the so-called master was "overrated"; that he was behind the times; that he was a bad punster, vulgar, illiterate, immoral and incorrect both as to form and matter. Mr. Watt suggested that the modern student be pastured in modern fields, and that Shakespeare be relegated to the worn-out region of bad spelling, bad puns, loose morals and obsolete forms.

It does not matter who is Watt.

He only expresses in audacious words what has long been the practice of the teachers in school and church, who, knowing nothing of substance, dwell forever upon forms. He is but one of a myriad of preachers and pedagogue who believe that an inane platitude well-spelled and prettily written is better than the mighty thought which is the soul of deeds and the secret of all wisdom.

"I believe that Shakespeare is vastly overrated," quoth Watt.

In a spelling-bee there can be no doubt that William Dean Howells, or even Ella Wheeler Wilcox, would put William Shakespeare to shame, and it is by such standards that Watt would measure the master. Weber and Fields' jokes are certainly more up-to-date, and when it comes to morals, Ralph Connor has the Bard of Avon beaten both ways from the jack. Instead of the "Comedy of Errors," Watt would doubtless prefer Ezra Kendall's "Gravy," or "Sis Hopkins—Her Book," as being both modern and moral.

Most school teachers are like Watt. They are so engrossed in rules and formulas, so awed by the sheer mechanism of their work that they forget its purpose and miss its potentialities. They do not know that a noble thought misspelled or mispronounced is far better worthy of the memory than drivell done into faultless English.

More fine penmanship has gone into the editor's waste-basket than ever found its way to a delighted printer. The hired man at the linotype can spell better than you can, but he sneers himself sick when he has to set literary hog-wash. Most school teaching is an effort to show the young "how to do" with never a thought of "what to do." It is all method and no meaning; all manner and no motive.

You shall spell words thus!

But what shall I say in words?

Whatever you know!

That's it! What do you know when you have learned to spell correctly, to write copper-plate, to calculate accurately? You probably know little or nothing about anything "that matters." But the school teacher doesn't care. Probably he knows as little as you. But it is not his business to know. It is to teach methods without regard to meanings. He is the boss Marionette—the Punch of pedagogical puppetry—and you are Judy and the baby. He whops you on the head, squeaks rules and orders at you and throws you out of the graduation window. He has taught you "how," but not "what" to do.

The churches are much like the schools. The bell rings and you bow your head. A candle is lighted and you beat your breast. The cathedral is a palace of marble and gold and jasper. The bishop's tunic is of linen and lace and his vestments weighty with precious metals and gems, each worth the life of the pagan who dug them.

And there are hungry women and children 'round the corner, to whom the light of a candle

is the bale-light of a coffin and of whom every bell is a knell. Christ died for them, but they cannot eat prayer books, nor stay their bellies with a weekly wafer of unleavened bread. The church is teaching them "how" to do, but never a word of "what" to do. It is easy to preach to a famished man, but at last he must go forth and loot a bakery. The boy who has learned his catechism may go home and break his mother's heart.

I had a schoolmate who wrote all the prize essays. He is now "librettist" for the filthiest leg show in the United States. He knew "how," but not "what" to write. He spells better than Shakespeare and his jokes are right off the bat; quite up to the Watt idea! I saw a man hanged in New Mexico for murdering his best friend. He recited the Lord's prayer and an act of contrition, and when he was buried, his friend's wife wept upon his grave.

Always the modern teachers seem to be standing closer to the forms of things. As if one could be eloquent who has nothing to say; as if one could move the heart and stir the intellect with well-spelled words and rhetorical periods that mean nothing; as if one must be generous and gentle and loving because he can recite an hundred lessons from the Bible; as if one must be a gentleman because he has fine raiment; or a lady because one does not work!—John H. Raftery in St. Louis Mirror.

TAPPED FROM THE WIRE.

"Hello! Hello! Yes, this is Mrs. Modestly-Innit's. Yes, Mrs. Modestly-Innit is at the 'phone. What's that? The office of the Snail in Distress? What? No, I didn't quite catch what you said. Do I know anything that is going on in society? Oh, really, you know, I am terribly flattered, but then I am afraid I don't know anything much. You see, I go about very little, after all. How's that? Just anything? Well, let me see. Did you hear that Miss Genevieve Goldsox is giving up Bridge, and that Mrs. Flyteon Hyghe has a new Japanese spaniel? And—and—really, I don't believe I know another solitary thing—though, you might—but no, on second thoughts I don't know as I ought to give that to you. You see, I'm so modest, and do so little. Still, after all, if you really, really, want it I guess I don't mind. You might say I am giving a small dinner Thursday night, and will use for the first time my million-dollar gold service, studded with sapphires. Oh, how stupid I am! but you won't mention the price, will you? Then—no—I'm afraid that is too personal. Mr. Modestly-Innit might object. You don't think so? Well—I don't know. But, anyway, I've just got a new string of pale green pearls thirty feet long, but as it only cost five millions, I beg and entreat that you will not say a word about that part of it. Then—no, that's absolutely all I know. I can't indeed—indeed I can't say another thing. You see, I'm so unimportant that I am afraid people will think—and then it is such a trivial matter after all. Still, use your own judgment; you know best what is right—Prince del Diego is coming over to visit here next week, and will be my guest. So sorry I don't know anything worth telling you, and—after all—perhaps you'd better not use those things about me. Still, if—oh, well, you can use your own judgment—only remember, no big heads—and you must never breathe—you're entirely welcome. Good-bye!"—The Hello Girl.—In Town Topics.

"What is the difference between a gown and a creation?"

"I can't give the exact figures, but it's a small fortune."—Chicago Evening Post.

THE CHILD IN THE GARDEN.

When to the garden of untroubled thought
I came of late, and saw the open door,
And wished again to enter, and explore
The sweet, wild ways with stainless bloom in-
wrought,
And bowers of innocence with beauty fraught,
It seemed some purer voice must speak be-
fore

I dared to tread that garden loved of yore,
That Eden lost unknown and found unsought.

Then just within the gate I saw a child—
A stranger-child, yet to my heart most dear—
He held his hands to me, and softly smiled
With eyes that knew no shade of sin or fear:
"Come in," he said, "and play awhile with me;
I am the little child you used to be."

—Atlantic Monthly.

"He proposed to her for fun."

"Well?"

"His ideas of humor have been materially changed."—Town Topics.

Salt Palace Resort

GRAND OPENING FRIDAY AND SATURDAY,

May 29-30

REFINED VAUDEVILLE

10—HIGH CLASS ACTS—10

Remsey and Bradham

Casey and Ward, Trovella and Landers

Jimmie West, Anderson, Santinella

And many other features.

BICYCLE RACES

Friday and Saturday Nights

All the Leading Fast Men of the Country.

W. J. Furman, Frank Hoffman,

Orlando Stevens, J. M. Chapman,

R. A. Agraz, L. M. Linberg

And hosts of other favorites.

A New Feature

DANCING IN NEW PAVILION

55X130 FEET.

7150 square feet of hard wood floor, with
FULL STRING ORCHESTRA.

WATCH FOR SOUVENIR NIGHT

Colorado Midland.



THE
POPULAR
ROUTE
OF
COLORADO

W. H. DONNELL,

General Agent.